

substantial profits and revenues by itself, not to mention the valuable future media rights to nonfiction accounts, books, interviews, endorsements, “true-story” movies, and so forth. This is on top of the actual value of the patents themselves. In another embodiment, the company may publicly announce that the resulting patents will all be donated to the public domain, free for use by anyone. Such an announcement may be so well received by the general public that the resulting increase in value of the media rights to the project (which may be called the Invention Marathon or the Patent Marathon) exceed the expected value of the patents that are promised to the public domain.

[0042] Next, instead of identifying a single inventor to potentially break the invention record, the company may announce and sponsor a competition among a plurality of potential inventor contenders to break the invention record. The company may offer a reward to the winner of the competition, whether or not the winner broke the invention record, or may reserve rewards only for the inventor(s) who break(s) the invention record. The company may also offer to the winner, the breaker(s) of the invention record, and/or all contenders at least a portion of the media rights generated and/or at least a portion of the royalty rights to future issued patents resulting from each contender’s inventions. For example, the company might offer each contender 50% of the value of his issued patents, or may offer each contender a pro-rata of a 50% share of the collective value of all issued patents, or an equal share of a 50% share of the collective value of all issued patents. For example, if all contenders produced 1000 patents, which ultimately are licensed for \$10M, and if Contender A produced 100 patents, while Contender B produced 150 patents, then Contender A would receive \$500K while Contender B would received \$750K, and so forth. The same may apply for any media rights collectively obtained. Any known way of compensating the inventor contenders, and at any percentage, is within the scope of the present invention. Of course, this generation so loves to be on television, and to do or endure so much for so little compensation (e.g., Fear Factor™), that the various inventor contenders may be willing to compete for a relatively small award (e.g., \$1 M or less), with the “losers” taking home nothing, in exchange for assigning to the company all media rights and all patent/royalty rights, which would amount to a fantastic return-on-investment for any company.

[0043] For such a competition, the invention record should probably deal with a number of submitted patent applications in a time period (which may be based on an expected allowance percentage and a maximum number of patents received in such a time period, as previously discussed), as the media buzz and attention would long be over before even the first of the hundreds or thousands of applications issued as a patent. In other words, a contender may win the competition if he submits at least a minimum number of patent applications, even if ultimately the number of issued patents does not break the issued-patent-based invention record. Further, the company may provide its own patent application drafting and prosecuting team, which may subjectively evaluate each invention submitted by each inventor contender to determine whether the invention is sufficiently likely to issue as a patent if submitted to the USPTO. The “reality” television show may thus include not only the wacky, animated, interesting inventors in the process of inventing, it may also include commentary by snotty patent

attorneys wearing bowties and speaking in thick English accents on the usefulness and/or patentability of each of the inventors’ inventions. Much like the arrogant and ultra-critical commentary and decisions of the judges on American Idol™, the nation hangs on the words of the patent attorney as he decides whether or not a particular invention is sufficiently useful, new, and patentable to be worthy of a patent application. If so, the inventor gets another application to his credit, on his way to breaking the invention record. If not, the inventor is shown uttering profanity under his breath, and consumers throw popcorn at their televisions. It all adds up to some exciting, suspenseful, inventing fun that can generate \$millions in media revenues.

[0044] Any and all of the features of the previously discussed embodiment (where the sponsor is approached) may be incorporated, where possible, into the above embodiment (where the sponsor approaches inventor(s) and/or announces an invention competition to which inventors apply). For example, in the case of the competition, at least some of the inventor applicants to the competition may be required to provide evidence of an ability to invent sufficiently many inventions to break the invention record. Of course, one or more of the chosen inventor contenders may be total crackpots with no real chance of breaking the invention record, provided primarily for comedy and consumer enjoyment.

[0045] Most of the embodiments described herein have represented simple versions for clarity of explanation. As understood by one of ordinary skill in the art, many of the features and/or aspects of the embodiments described herein may be “mixed and matched” to the extent physically possible to satisfy individual design requirements. These variations are merely examples, and do not limit the scope of the present invention. Any features described herein may be mixed and matched with other features to form embodiments not specifically described but within the scope of the present invention.

[0046] The present invention includes one or more of the steps discussed, as well as the causing or inciting or encouraging of another to perform one or more of the steps. For example, if a method comprises steps A, B, and C according to one embodiment of the present invention, then a method comprising performing or inciting another to perform one or more of steps A, B, and C, where A, B, and C are performed, includes the following scenarios as examples: a person performs A, B, and C; a person encourages another to perform steps A, B, and C; a person performs steps A and B and encourages another to perform step C; a person performs step A, pays a first person to perform step B, and causes a second person to perform step C; and so forth.

1-20. (canceled)

21. A method of executing a competition, comprising:

- a) soliciting a plurality of inventor contenders to participate in a competition relating to inventions;
- b) hosting the competition among the plurality of contenders;
- c) publishing the competition;
- d) offering a reward to a winner of the competition; and